

W I L L I A M

AND

H E N R Y,

A

DIALOGUE FOR THE ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

Royal Humane Society, 1798.



ARGUMENT.

WILLIAM having been honoured, (on the 28th of March, 1797,) with the Approbation of the Founders, Managers, Stewards, and Friends, of the Royal Humane Society, of London, for his Recitation of one of the Commemoration-Odes, written by his Father, — HENRY, a Director's Son who was present at the above Ceremony, having requested to participate with WILLIAM at the ensuing Festival, the Author introduces him in the following Dialogue, in which, after a short Eulogy to the Memory and Sufferings of VIRGIL, (in the Manner of whose beautiful Pastorals this Poem is attempted,) they invoke his Muse, — recite the Miseries of Mankind, arising from an early Addition to Pleasure, and the unrestrained Gratification of the Passions, (ending too often in the Commission of SUICIDE, a CRIME unknown to every Species of animated Nature but Man,) — and conclude with an Address to the Founders, Managers, Stewards, and Medical Assistants, of the Society.

To

558083

To the Rev. Dr. GREGORY,

Domestic Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of LANDAFF, &c. &c. &c.

IT is no small Gratification to my Mind, that the following Lines were approved by you, when submitted to your Judgement.

The eminent Talents you possess place you amongst those who have refined human Nature by the Practice of those Virtues which adorn it.

The impressive reasoning in your Sermon* against Suicide, preached before the Founders, Stewards, and Friends, of the Royal Humane Society, of London, on the 26th of March, 1797, is the Climax of true Christian Philosophy. From your sacred Censer I have presumed to take a small Portion of that Philanthropy which so eminently irradiates it.

To you, Sir, and to every other Labourer in the Vineyard of good Will and good Works, more particularly to Dr. Hawes and those distinguished Characters who unite for the Establishment of that excellent Institution, (the Subject of my present Theme,) I beg Leave to offer this Poem,

And am, with the truest Respect,

Your and their devoted humble Servant,

*Bellmont, Vauxhall,
April 10, 1798.*

JOHN GRETTON.

* Printed at the Request of the Society, and sold by Messrs. Rivingtons, St. Paul's Church-Yard, &c.

WILLIAM

W I L L I A M

AND

H E N R Y.

WILLIAM.

WHEN ROME'S BASE SENATE lent its impious Hand,
At CÆSAR'S NOD, to devastate the Land;

When LIBERTY, beneath the baneful Shade
Of mercenary Legions, sunk dismay'd;

When LAWLESS MANDATES, from fair Mantua's Plains,
Swept in vast Ruin all her Shepherd-Swains;

VIRGIL'S great Soul invok'd the Doric Reed,
To soothe those Ills which Tyranny decreed.

His woe-struck Numbers sav'd the hallow'd Groves,
Where erst those Shepherds oft had told their Loves:

— Again beneath his fav'rite Beach reclin'd,
He sung those Days his classic Muse refin'd. —

His Notes be ours, — be ours his Flight,
To Regions of poetic Light;
So shall his Muse attune our Lyres,
And warm each Breast at Pity's Fires.

HENRY.

HENRY.

Thy Voice, dear Youth, again with Joy I hear,
 Again propitious claim th'approving Ear ;
 My Breast responsive feels the genial Ray,
 And pants to join with thee its humble Lay :
 Unskill'd, as yet, in Song like thine to soar,
 Or touch the Lyre, its mighty Pow'rs explore ;
 How shall my trembling Lip with thine rehearse
 Themes far beyond my untaught feeble Verse ?

WILLIAM.

My Friend, it ill becomes the manly Soul,
 That fancy'd Weakness should its Will control :
 Essay thy Skill, and boldly touch the String,
 'TIS RESCU'D NATURE CALLS ! — her Cause we sing :
 Around this Temple see what Crowds attend,
 The grateful Parent and the gen'rous Friend ;
 The sorrowing Mother's Tears no longer rise,
 Her joyful Pæans reach th'applauding Skies.
 O'er Love's fair Cestus Hymen's Roses blow,
 And purer Incense round his Altars glow ;
 A Wreath to grace these Trophies thou must twine,
 And deck (for well thou can'st) their festal Shrine.

HENRY.

————— Begin the Song,
 To thee the Master-Verse doth sure belong:

WILLIAM.

WILLIAM.

GENIUS OF BRITAIN ! from thy Throne sublime,
 Where stand thy HEROES from remotest Time ;
 Where FREEDOM'S SACRED FIRE, still round their Urns,
 Eternal adds new Lustre as it burns.
 O ! grant, my humble Muse, thy kindliest Ray,
 Propitious smile and consecrate this Day ;
 Give sweet COMPASSION ev'ry Breast to fill,
 Glow round the Heart, through ev'ry Fibre thrill ;
 So shall BENEVOLENCE, benignant Maid !
 Adorn our Rites by her protective Aid.

—— Oft have I heard the Groan of Death
 From Misery's wretched Mansions come :
 There SORROW's fainting Victim yields its Breath,
 A prey to sad Despair, it seeks the awful Tomb.
 Say, HENRY, by what strange, what dire, Decree,
 Doth Man alone thus brave Eternity ?
 Is Life too long ! the Smiles of Bliss too few !
 Is this World's Space too finite for his View ?
 Is he sole Arbiter of Joy and Woe ?
 Would he direct what all must undergo ?
 Would he (*poor sublunary Being*) move
 A SELF-CREATED GOD, and rule yon Realms above ?
 —— Life was not lent us to arrest from Heav'n
 That Bliss which to the Good alone is giv'n :
 Why then anticipate the destin'd Hour,
 Rush on to Death, and dare his dreaded Pow'r ?

HENRY.

HENRY.

O WRETCHED BEING ! whom imperious Fate
 Oft sinks thus low beneath his pristine State ;
 — Bright shines his Morn of Life with lovelier Dyes,
 Than deck fair IRIS in her dew-dropp'd Skies ;
 Till FANCY points to where th'alluring Wiles
 Of PLEASURE's flitting Charms each Sense beguiles ;
 Where the FIERCE PASSIONS, unrestrain'd, invade
 THOSE BOUNDS his Youth, his Innocence, had made !
 — For him no more return the smiling Hours,
 For him no longer bloom Health's fragrant Flow'rs :
 Though varying Seasons plenteously produce
 Spontaneous Blessings for his daily Use,
 He spurns ! he flies the Good ! thus kindly giv'n,
 And, lost to Reason, braves the Will of Heav'n !
 Froward, — Ingrate, — plunges to Sin's Abode,
 Forgets that he is MAN ! that GOD is GOD !
 To the Abyss of Horror takes his Flight ;
 And, self-condemn'd, he sinks to endless Night.

WILLIAM.

WILLIAM.

Thrice happy, ye who chaunt the Woods among,
 And hail th'empurpled Morn with choral Song ;
 Thrice happy, ye meek Tenants of the Plain ;
 Happy, ye finny Subjects of the Main ;
 For you the gushing Rill, the flow'ry Vales,
 For you fair Zephyr fans her genial Gales ;
 For you cerulean TETHYS hourly laves
 Earth's boundless Shores, and spreads for you her Waves ;
 While AMPHITRITE, from her coral Bow'rs,
 For you divides the Deep, and decks each Shore with Flow'rs :
 — True to great NATURE'S LAW and pow'rful Sway ;
 Implicit Rev'rence marks your humble Way ;
 'Tis she alone your Breasts with Passion fires ;
 As Instinct prompts or Appetite inspires ;
 Her ample Bounties socially ye share,
 And leave to wretched Man — SHAME, SORROW, and DESPAIR.

HENRY.

Enough, my Friend, of human Woe I feel,
 To other Themes attune the Lyre, —
 Let not the deadly Bowl, the blood-stain'd Steel,
 The fatal Cord, or yawning Deep, conspire
 To damp the Scene now bursting on the Sight,
 [*Here the great Doors are opened.*]
 Glowing with Tints more vivid and more bright ;
 Recording Spirits round Life's Altar stand,
 Restor'd they come to hail the gen'rous Hand,
 That rais'd such Blessings in his native Land.*

* Dr. Hawes.

WILLIAM,

WILLIAM,

To Dr. Hawes and the Medical Assistants.

To you whose bounteous Breasts with Pity glow,
Whose Souls expansive melt at others Woe ;
Whose SKILL, whose Pow'r, disarms the Stroke of DEATH,
Rekindles and restores Life's parting Breath ;
An Hecatomb of Thanks my Muse shall raise,
As yonder Host records your well-earn'd Praise.

HENRY,

To the Managers, Stewards, and Company.

To THOSE who feel the glorious Means to bless,
Whose kindred Hearts Heav'n's purest Rays impress ;
To those bright Gems who deck this earthly Sphere,
Its wretched Sons relieve, and dry the sorrowing Tear ;
My willing Muse with thine inscribes the Lay,
I offer at their Shrine this VOTIVE Day.

WILLIAM.

HENRY, 'tis Time we end the friendly Song,
Grateful Impatience murmurs through the Throng ;

[Here the Procession enters to soft Music.]

Beaming on ev'ry happy Brow I see,
Refulgent shine thy Rays, O CHARITY !
Diffusing round a Lustre far more bright,
Than the false Glare of Ostentation's Light ;
With sympathetic Joy their Bosoms glow,
In REDOLENCE and HEALTH they smile, RESTOR'D TO LIFE by YOU.



